

DEPARTMENTAL BUDGET INFORMATION

LAW (32)

MISSION

The mission of the Law Department is to deliver excellent and efficient legal counseling and representation to the Executive and Legislative branches of City government as mandated by the City Charter.

DESCRIPTION

The Law Department is headed by the corporation counsel, who is appointed by the Mayor. The Law Department is comprised of five divisions: Administrative, Commercial, Labor/Workers' Compensation, Property/Environmental and Litigation. Each division, with the exception of the Administrative Division, is responsible for a discrete area of the law and is made up of several sections.

The Law Department is required, by Charter, to represent the City of Detroit in all civil actions or proceedings filed against the city. The corporation counsel may also prosecute any action or proceeding in which the city has a legal interest when directed to do so by the Mayor. The corporation counsel is the city prosecutor and shall institute, on behalf of the people, cases arising from the provisions of the charter or city ordinances, and prosecute all actions for the recovery of fines, penalties and forfeitures.

The Law Department is also responsible for providing advice and opinions to the Mayor, a member of City Council or the head of any city agency, for approving all contracts, bonds and written instruments and for drafting, upon the request of the Mayor or any member of City Council, any ordinance

or resolution for introduction before City Council.

MAJOR INITIATIVES

The demand for legal services has increased commensurate with the growth in volume and diversity of the City's operations. The Department is committed to providing timely assistance and improving response time to its clients to acceptable industry standards.

The Law Department has attempted to keep pace with the growing demand through increased emphasis on client service and responsiveness; enhanced skills training of lawyers, paralegal and clerical support staff; improved management and supervision of the Department's many law practices; modernization of Law's internal practice support systems such as automated time tracking and billing systems, records management system, and case management and litigation support systems; streamlining of the Department's systems; and improvement of law practice aids and manuals.

The Law Department has a range of major initiatives for each division in fiscal year 2002-2003. The Tax section has begun to uniformly take action in probate cases in which the respondent abandons his/her property in the City without paying city taxes or demolition fees. The Community Prosecution Unit has been established to provide the residents of the City a proactive link to law enforcement, the city and its services. Through a combined approach, the issues that effect the community can be immediately addressed to improve the

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quality of life for its citizens. The problems of drug houses and abandoned buildings will be the first issue addressed by the Community Prosecution Unit.

Internally, the Law Department began a review of all outside legal contracts in January 2002 and has already started bringing the outside cases that can properly be returned, in-house. In addition, the department began reorganizing the supervisory structure of the department to evenly distribute the talent and rearrange the current "top-heavy" hierarchical structure. Furthermore, only the Director and Deputy Director presently have settlement authority and therefore, direct control over the flow of litigation settlements by the City.

In conjunction with the 36th District Court, the Law Department is currently revamping and rewriting ordinances to increase the amount of fine revenue coming to the City, as well as making the amounts of City fines on par with those of the surrounding suburbs and the State laws. The Municipal and Ordinance section is presently handling this project.

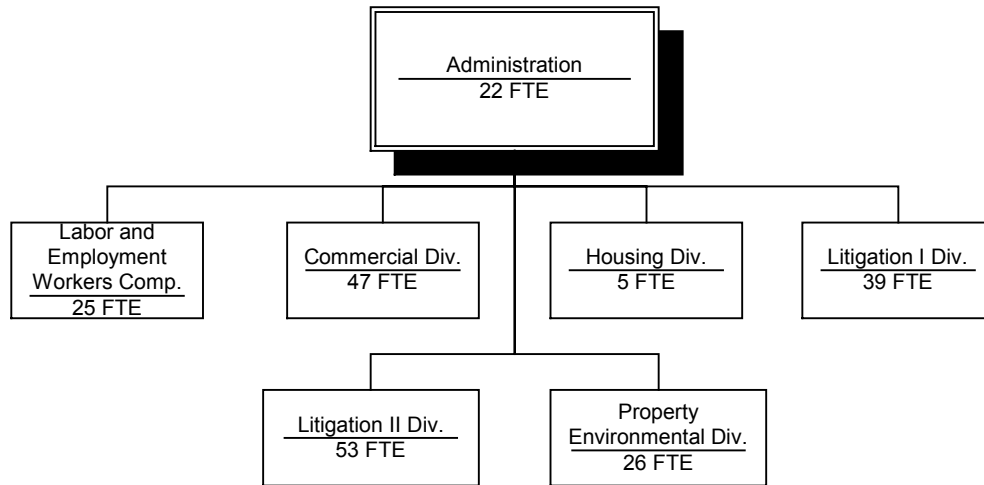
The Law Department has increased the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) section

as a result of increased FOIA requests. This section has experienced a minimal workload increase due to budget restraints. The FOIA section is also equipped to provide training and guidance to various departments throughout the City.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

The new Corporation Counsel and Deputy Corporation Counsel are currently undertaking a new litigation reorganization of the Law Department with the following four goals in their immediate plan of action: (1) The department will aggressively investigate all sources of grant money in order to assist in funding the Community Prosecution Unit and the FOIA section. Combining the Police Department and their community policing strategy may also provide a funding opportunity. (2) The department will also work with the Police Department on risk management, legal update seminars and disciplinary hearings. (3) Another departmental goal is to combine with Neighborhood City Halls and city departments to effectively address the quality of life concerns of the community. Finally, (4) the Law Department plans to change the concept of lawsuits with the City from "settle" to "fight".

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PERFORMANCE GOALS, MEASURES AND TARGETS

Goals: Measures	2000-01 Actual	2001-02 Projection	2002-03 Target
Maximize and monitor the level of client satisfaction with department services: Percent of clients rating department services satisfactory or better.	60%	95%	95%
Provide effective, ongoing and proactive advice and counseling to all City departments: Clients' risk management training initiated Percent of timely responses to written assignments	40 70%	50 95%	N/A 100%
Provide continuous professional skills training to all lawyers and staff to maximize the quality and efficiency of legal services delivered to the City: Percent of professional staff attending at least one external training program per year	N/A	80%	100%
Maximize the City's financial position through aggressive collection of City revenues, effective representation in claims and litigation for and against the City, and effective and timely advice and representation of the City in commercial and development transactions: Levels of revenue collections	\$15,000,000	\$16,837,812	\$20,250,000

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EXPENDITURES

	2000-01 Actual Expense	2001-02 Redbook	2002-03 Mayor's Budget Rec	Variance	Variance Percent
Salary & Wages	\$ 10,809,704	\$ 12,965,445	\$ 13,346,558	\$ 381,113	3%
Employee Benefits	4,681,743	6,470,370	6,620,525	150,155	2%
Prof/Contractual	7,922,784	6,648,738	4,921,701	(1,727,037)	-26%
Operating Supplies	151,486	394,822	306,182	(88,640)	-22%
Operating Services	4,659,193	4,520,673	3,948,659	(572,014)	-13%
Capital Equipment	218,213	347,959	80,000	(267,959)	-77%
Other Expenses	83,913	112,000	112,000	-	0%
TOTAL	\$ 28,527,036	\$ 31,460,007	\$ 29,335,625	\$ (2,124,382)	-7%
POSITIONS	170	219	217	(2)	-1%

REVENUES

	2000-01 Actual Revenue	2001-02 Redbook	2002-03 Mayor's Budget Rec	Variance	Variance Percent
Grants/ Shared	61,590	-	-	-	0%
Sales & Charges	\$ 6,825,853	\$ 3,631,332	\$ 3,631,332	\$ -	0%
Miscellaneous	188,110	95,000	180,000	85,000	89%
TOTAL	\$ 7,075,553	\$ 3,726,332	\$ 3,811,332	\$ 85,000	2%